

Remarks

I. Introduction

This is in response to the Office Action dated August 8, 2005. The Office Action rejected claims 1, 4-8, 12-14, 17-19, 25, 44 and 45 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,841,839 (Fogg et al.). Claims 9, 10, 20-23, 27 and 30-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fogg et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,590,184 (London).

Applicants traverse the rejections.

Claims 1, 4-14, 17-28, 30-33, 44 and 45 are currently pending and remain for consideration.

II. All Pending Claims are Allowable Over the Cited Art

Independent claims 1 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fogg et al. Both independent claims 1 and 14 are distinguishable over Fogg et al as follows.

Claim 1 contains the limitation of:

multiple ports identified by at least one designation element,
at least one end user device connected to each port

Claim 14 contains the limitation of:

multiple ports identified by multiple designations with at least one end user device
connected to each port

Fogg et al. does not disclose these limitations of claims 1 and 14. One embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in Fig. 7, which shows the BRG 300 including multiple ports 332 connected to end user devices 110. An end user device is a device used by an end user of a system, as such term is well known in the art. With respect to the designation element, in one embodiment the designation is a directory number.

The Office Action cites Fogg et al. at col. 5, lines 7-12 and 38-61; col. 4, lines 51-54; and Figs. 2, 3 and 5, as disclosing these limitations. In particular, the Office Action identifies the ports 44 shown in Figs. 2 and 5 as disclosing the claimed ports. However, these cited portions of Fogg et al. do not disclose these claim limitations. First, there is no disclosure of the ports 44 being identified by a designation element (e.g., a directory number). These ports 44 are input ports, and are part of the switching assembly of Fogg et al. Nowhere in Fogg et al. is there any indication that these ports are identified by a designation element. The Office Action states that “the claimed designation element is a telephone number resident in the telephone extension station of Fig. 3.” However, there are two problems with this statement. First, there is no disclosure in Fogg et al. to support the assertion that there is a telephone number resident in the telephone extension station of Fig. 3. If the Office Action is relying on col. 5, lines 7-12 for this disclosure, then such reliance is incorrect, because the numbers referred to in that section are extracted by an integration device 32, which is not part of the telephone extension station 26.

Second, and moreover, the telephone extension station of Fig. 3, labeled with callout reference 26, is part of the PBX 20 (see Fig. 3 and Col. 4, lines 60-66), and is not part of the switching assembly 40 which contains the ports 44. As is shown in the figures of Fogg et al., ports 44 are part of the switching assembly 40 (Fig. 5), the switching assembly 40 is part of the apparatus 12 (Fig. 2), and thus the ports 44 are part of the apparatus 12. As is clear from Fig. 1A, the apparatus 12 is separate from the PBX 20, and therefore any “telephone number resident in the telephone extension station” cannot be read upon the claimed designation elements that identify ports as claimed in claims 1 and 14. For these reasons, there is no disclosure in Fogg et al. of the ports 44 being identified by a designation element.

In addition, the above identified limitations of claim 1 also include a limitation relating to end user devices connected to the ports. However, Fogg et al. does not show any end user devices connected to ports 44. As shown in Figs. 2 and 5, the ports 44 are connected to PBX's, not to end user devices. More particularly, as shown in Figs. 2 and 5, the ports 44 are connected to voice mail extensions 14VME, 16VME, 18VME and 20VME (col. 5, lines 46-50), which are in turn connected to PBX's (see Fig. 4 and col. 5,

lines 18-29). Thus, the ports 44 are connected to PBX's, which are telephone exchange systems (see col. 1, lines 18-35) and not end user stations.

Claim 1 also contains the limitation of:

a processing unit, wherein said processing unit provides a greeting and routes a signal received by said transceiver to one of said multiple ports selected by an end user using said greeting

Claim 14 contains the limitation of:

a processing unit which provides a greeting and, upon receiving a signal including one of said multiple designations, said processing unit routes said signal to one of said multiple ports depending on a port selected by an end user using said greeting

Thus, claims 1 and 14 contain limitations directed to the processing unit providing a greeting and routing a received signal to one of the multiple ports which has been selected by an end user using the greeting. The Office Action, in rejecting claims 1 and 14, cites Fogg et al. at col. 5, lines 7-12; col. 6, lines 50-51; and col. 7, lines 16-20. However, the cited portions of Fogg et al. do not disclose the claimed subject matter.

First, the claims require that the signal be routed to one of the ports "selected by an end user using said greeting". Thus, the claim requires that an end user select the port using the greeting. Nowhere in Fogg et al. is such a system disclosed. While each of the above cited portions of Fogg et al. contain keywords which at the surface seem relevant to the present invention, none of the cite portions, either alone or in combination, are closely related to the claimed subject matter. Col. 5, lines 7-12 of Fogg et al. is directed to an external integration device, which is referred to therein as a VoiceBridge. The device extracts certain call information in order to identify a call to the voice mail system. Col. 6, lines 50-51 of Fogg et al. merely discloses the well known functionality of a voice mail system of playing a greeting, recording a message, and disconnecting. There is nothing however, which indicates any user interaction with the system other than leaving a message. Certainly this sentence of Fogg et al. does not disclose the user selecting a port for signal routing. Col. 7, lines 16-20 of Fogg et al. disclose a message waiting indicator (MWI) technique. However, there is no disclosure nor suggestion of any end user interaction with a greeting, nor any suggestion of an end user selecting a port using a greeting. If the Examiner persists in this rejection, Applicants respectfully request that

the Examiner explain how the cited portions of Fogg et al. disclose a processing unit providing a greeting and routing a received signal to one of the multiple ports which has been selected by an end user using the greeting, so that Applicants may fully respond to any further rejection.

Further, the above cited portion of claims 1 and 14 require that a signal be routed to the selected port. However, the ports 44 cited by the Office Action are **input** ports (see Fig. 2 label) for “receiving connections from the various voice mail extensions” (col. 5, lines 46-49). Therefore, these ports of Fogg et al. cannot be read on the claim limitation where a signal is routed “**to**” the port based on user input.

Independent claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fogg et al. in view of London. Claim 27 contains the limitations of “mapping said directory number with said multiple ports on said end user interface”, where the end user interface is “located at a customer premises”. The Office Action admits that Fogg et al. does not disclose this limitation, and relies on London for this limitation. However, London does not disclose “an end user interface” which is “located at a customer premises” as claimed. In London, while there is disclosure of correlating a port number to a telephone number, the port correlated with the telephone number is not a port on an “end user interface located at a customer premises”. The port of London is a port on the central office switch 104, which is not an end user interface located at a customer premises.

In addition, for the reasons discussed above in conjunction with claims 1 and 14, Fogg et al. does not disclose “selecting a port using said greeting” and “directing said incoming call to said selected port”. For these additional reasons, claim 27 cannot be anticipated by Fogg et al.

For the reasons discussed above, independent claims 1, 14 and 27 are allowable over the cited references. All remaining dependent claims depend from an allowable independent claim and are therefore also allowable. In addition, the dependent claims recite additional allowable subject matter as follows.

Dependent claims 4-6, 17-19 and 30-32 are directed to aspects of the invention in which the processing unit provides a message after the greeting, where the greeting and message are customized, and where multiple greetings and messages are stored. The

Office Action does not address these limitation (e.g., providing a message after the greeting) and as such, has failed to make a prima facie showing of obviousness with respect to these claims. As such, Applicants request withdrawal of the §103 rejection with respect to these claims. If the Examiner persists in the rejection of these claims, Applicants request a particular application of the cited references to the limitations of these claims.

Dependent claims 7, 8, 20, 21 and 28 are directed to an aspect of the invention in which an end user device provides a distinctive alert or ring. The Office Action cites Fogg et al. at col. 5, lines 7-10 as disclosing this limitation. More particularly, the Examiner states that “the claimed distinct ring corresponds to ring no answer as evidenced by Fogg”. Applicants do not understand the Examiner’s argument. Distinctive ringing, as described in the specification of the application at page 47, line 25 - page 48, line 6, is the use of different alerts (e.g., rings) on different telephone so that the telephones may be distinguished (e.g., by the sound of the ring). A “ring no answer code” is not a distinctive ring, and is unrelated to the claimed subject matter. The mere fact that the word “ring” appears in both “distinctive ring” and “ring no answer code” does not render the claimed subject matter unpatentable. If the Examiner persists in this rejection, Applicants request an explanation of how the above described “distinctive ring” is equivalent to a “ring no answer code”.

Dependent claims 9, 10, 22, 23 and 33 are directed to an aspect of the invention in which an end user device displays or announces an identity of a port selected by the end user. The Office Action cites London at col. 3, lines 8-18 as disclosing this limitation. However, the cited portion of London et al. merely discloses the well known caller identification service, whereby an identification of the calling party, **from which** the call is received, is displayed to the called party. However, claims 9, 10, 22, 23 and 33 are not related to this service. Instead, these claims are directed to displaying or announcing the identify of the port selected by the user. The port here is the port **to which** the signals are routed. This is very different from the well know caller identification service. As such, these claims are allowable over the cited art.

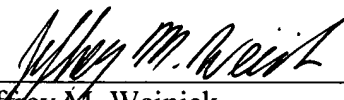
Claims 44 and 45 are directed to the limitation of “wherein said end user interface is located at a customer premises.” The Office Action rejects these claims citing Fig. 1A

of Fogg et al. However, Fig. 1A shows no customer premises. It is noted that claims 44 and 45 limit claims 1 and 14 such that the multiple ports, user devices, transceiver, and processing unit, are required to be at a customer premises. Clearly, fig. 1A of Fogg et al. does not disclose such a system, and therefore claims 44 and 45 are allowable. If the Examiner persists in this rejection of claims 44 and 45, Applicants request that the Examiner point out particular portions of the cited references that disclose the above described elements located at a customer premises.

III. Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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